

MINUTES
SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 17, 2006
9:07 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Lyda Green convened the meeting at approximately [9:07:27 AM](#).

PRESENT

Senator Lyda Green, Co-Chair
Senator Con Bunde, Vice Chair
Senator Fred Dyson
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Donny Olson

Also Attending: HEATHER BRAKES, Staff to Senator Gene Therriault;
CHRIS CHRISTENSEN, Deputy Administration Commissioner, Alaska Court System

Attending via Teleconference: There were no teleconference participants.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

SB 210-VIOL. OF ALCOHOLIC BEV. LAWS/FORFEITURE

The bill heard from the bill's sponsor and reported the bill from Committee.

SB 237-ADDITIONAL JUDGES FOR THIRD DISTRICT

The Committee heard from the Alaska Court System and reported the bill from Committee.

#sb210

SENATE BILL NO. 210

"An Act relating to the manufacture and transportation of alcoholic beverages; relating to forfeitures of property for violations of alcoholic beverage laws; and relating to violations of alcoholic beverage laws."

This was the second hearing for this bill in the Senate Finance Committee.

[9:07:53 AM](#)

HEATHER BRAKES, Staff to Senator Gene Therriault, the bill's sponsor, informed the Committee that no additional sponsor testimony would be presented.

Co-Chair Green spoke in support of the bill.

In response to a question from Co-Chair Green, Senator Olson noted that he had no continuing concerns in regards to the bill.

Senator Bunde moved to report the bill from Committee with individual recommendations and accompanying fiscal notes.

There being no objection, SB 210 was REPORTED from Committee with zero fiscal note #1 from the Department of Public Safety.

[9:09:19 AM](#)

#sb237

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 237(JUD)

"An Act increasing the number of superior court judges designated for the third and fourth judicial districts to provide additional superior court judges at Anchorage, Palmer, Kenai, and Fairbanks; and providing for an effective date."

This was the second hearing for this bill in the Senate Finance Committee.

Co-Chair Green stated that this legislation would increase the number of judges in the State, would address expenses associated with Courthouse expansions, and would allow judge's salaries to conform with the salary increases that had been approved for Commissioners the previous year. She had been unaware that that legislation had not included compensation for judges.

[9:10:12 AM](#)

Senator Stedman voiced confidence that the Committee's budget subcommittees would qualify the fiscal notes accompanying this legislation within their budget recommendations for FY 07.

Co-Chair Green voiced appreciation of Senator Stedman's concern

that the various fiscal notes accompanying this bill "would muddy up the appropriations process" in the capital budget. Legislative approval is required in order to increase the number of judges. She noted that the Mat-Su Courthouse expansion had been included in the FY 06 capital budget. Were the decision made to include the Kenai Courthouse expansion expenses in the FY 07 capital budget, the Alaska Court System's fiscal note accompanying this legislation would be zeroed out. There would be no "double funding" concern either for the increased judge positions or for courthouse expansion.

Senator Bunde moved to report the bill from Committee with individual recommendations and accompanying fiscal notes.

Co-Chair Green noted that although the legislation would be accompanied by "substantial fiscal notes", the provisions of the bill are "badly needed". The Mat-Su, Kenai, Anchorage, and Fairbanks courts are in dire need of more judges.

Senator Stedman asked for confirmation that the committee substitute Version 24-GS2077\F was before the Committee.

Co-Chair Green affirmed.

Senator Olson asked the reason that the bill's title specifically identifies that the number of superior court judges in the third and fourth judicial districts would be increased; as language in Sec. 6 page 2, line 29 also make a reference to judges in the first judicial district.

[9:12:52 AM](#)

CHRIS CHRISTENSEN, Deputy Administrative Commissioner, Alaska Court System agreed that the language in Sec. 6 could be confusing. He explained that while the total number of the superior court judges would be increased from 34 to 40 by this bill, the increases would be specific to the third and fourth judicial districts. The number of third judicial district superior court judges would increase from 19 from 24 and the fourth judicial district would be increased from seven to eight. The first and second judicial district courts would be unaffected by this legislation.

Senator Olson acknowledged.

There being no objection, CS SB 237(FIN) was REPORTED from Committee with previous \$71,900 fiscal note #2 from the Alaska Judicial Council, a new zero fiscal note dated February 13, 2006 from the Division of Elections, a new \$293,700 fiscal note dated

February 15, 2006 from the Department of Corrections, a new \$198,800 fiscal note dated February 15, 2006 from the Department of Law, and a new \$5,722,000 fiscal note dated February 14, 2006 from the Alaska Court System.

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ADJOURNMENT

Co-Chair Lyda Green adjourned the meeting at [9:14:42 AM](#)